

Flynn, Eileen

From: Tammy Boutin <batchinterpreting@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2015 9:19 AM
To: HSTestimony
Subject: Raised Bill 6765 - Interpreter Qualifications

To the Human Services Committee:

My name is Tammy Batch. I am a certified interpreter for DORS. I have been an interpreter for over 15 years and several of my family members are deaf and use interpreting services.

I agree with the intent of Raised Bill 6765 to update and strengthen the training and educational requirements for sign language interpreters to work in Connecticut. However, I do not agree with downgrading the certification qualifications for interpreters in legal settings from the current requirement of a CI and CT or NIC to any certificate from RID and downgrading the current requirement for a NAD 5 to a NAD 4. Raised Bill 6765 sends the wrong message to Connecticut's Deaf community by equating the knowledge and proficiency demonstrated by higher levels of certification with time spent in a workshop.

A few years ago, RID -- the national body that certifies interpreters -- raised the bar by requiring a Bachelor's degree to sit for any of their certification exams, including the Specialist Certificate: Legal (SC:L) exam. Furthermore, the SC:L exam requires a CI and CT or NIC as well as documentation of at least 50 hours of legal interpreting/mentoring experience in addition to at least 30 hours of legal training. If Connecticut's intent is to bring qualifications in the legal setting up to a national standard, then this is where the bar should be.

With interpreters being on different RID four-year Certificate Maintenance cycles, the language in Raised Bill 6765 does not have a clear time frame for training hour requirements. Nor is it clear what will be considered acceptable training and who will be qualified to make such a determination.

Based on my personal experience and opinion, the certification level for interpreters in the legal setting should not be downgraded and the language of this bill should be clear in regards to the who, when, and what will satisfy the addition of training hour requirements in the legal and medical settings.

Thank you for your time and attention on this matter.

Tammy Batch, CI and CT